



## HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH STRESS

Stress is an automatic, natural response to the threatening and enjoyable pressures of life. Everyone needs some amount of stress to function properly, but too much stress can be harmful.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD DEAL WITH STRESS

- Work to identify the causes of stress in your child's life.
- Develop a plan together to handle the stressors.
- Identify with your child by "walking in his/ her shoes".

### SIGNS OF STRESS

- Nervousness
- Headaches
- Anxiety
- Escapism
- Overeating
- Loss of appetite
- Stomachaches
- Sleep problems
- Irritability
- Unable to have fun

### TECHNIQUES YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW TO REDUCE STRESS

**Physical Activity-** It relaxes muscles and releases calming chemicals in the brain.

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**Deep Breathing-** Tension is reduced by taking slow, deep breaths.

**Imagining-** Picture yourself having fun.

### **ACTION PLAN FOR REDUCING YOUR CHILD'S STRESS**

- Work to maintain a consistent, loving, stable home.
- Teach your child to communicate his/ her feelings and fears.
- Help your child identify the five W's of their stress: What, Why, When, Where and Who.
- Explain how one can cope with those stresses.
- Work together, parent and child, to reduce stress in both your lives.
- If stress persists seek professional help.

### **WHO TO CALL FOR HELP**

- School counselors, psychologists or the principal
- Social service organizations such as your local children's services
- Counselors, psychiatrists, therapists, or other mental health professionals
- For more information about parent support groups in your area, call the Wichita State University Center for Community Support and Research at 1-800-445-0116.



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